



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

it is drawn to the shore and the flesh greedily devoured by the natives.

The banks of the Zambezi* near Senna are extensively inundated in the rainy season, and then crowds of wild animals of every description are driven to take refuge on the higher grounds, which stand out like so many islands in the midst of an inland sea; here the natives assail them, and commit great havoc amongst the defenceless herds: even the ferocious beasts of the forest submit then to be slaughtered unresistingly by the spears and arrows of their foes.

It is by no means an unfrequent occurrence for a tiger, or rather panther, to pay a visit to the town in the night.

II.—*Mayotta and the Comoro Islands.* By T. S. LEIGH, Esq.

[Read June 21, 1848.]

WHILST passing through the Mosambique Channel a few years since an opportunity occurred of visiting this cluster of islands, situated near the northern entrance of that channel, between Cape Ambre, the extremity of Madagascar, on one side, and Cape Delgado, the E. coast of Africa, on the other. It is almost superfluous to state that this group consists of four islands: Comoro, which gives its name to the group, but is called by the natives Angazija; Johanna or Nzuaana, already sufficiently described by various travellers; Mohilla; and last, but not least, Mayotta, one but little, if at all, frequented by navigators, but to which public attention has been lately in some measure directed by the proposed colonization of it by the French.

The dangerous reefs, that stretch a distance of several miles from the shores of Mayotta, as well as the supposed difficulty of procuring provisions, have doubtless contributed at all times to deter vessels from touching there, the more so as they have the certainty of obtaining a good supply and a hospitable reception at Johanna, where, moreover, there is a safe roadstead. Undeterred, however, by the risks to be encountered, we stretched across from the latter island, having on board Shea Abdallah, an uncle, and at one time prime minister, of its most potent monarch. According to this man's account, the royal family of Johanna is descended from one of three Persian princes, who some centuries since were driven from their country either during one of the revolutions then so common,

* Vide Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. ii. p. 136, vol. iii. p. 199, vol. v. p. 340, vol. xv. p. 185, vol. xvi. p. 139.—Ed.

or by the tyranny of the sovereign on the throne, and with some followers fled to the Comoro Islands, where they were well received by the barbarous inhabitants, and ere long established as kings in the three larger ones, introducing a higher degree of civilization than that to which the natives had attained. In course of time the descendants of the two younger princes, who had settled at Comoro and Mayotta, became extinct, and the elder line alone remained. This history the Shea related with great self-complacency,

As a sequel to the above I may mention that Dansúlú, King of Mayotta at the time of my visit, was chief of the Sacalavas (literally long people) on the N.W. coast of Madagascar, when Radama, King of the Ovahs, had it in contemplation to subject the whole of that island to his dominion. Having been frequently defeated by Ramaneetoka, Radama's brother, and finding that there was no repose for him in Madagascar, Dansúlú at length fled in despair to Johanna, where he was kindly received by Sultan Abdallah, and as a compensation for the loss of his territories in Madagascar, made Viceroy or King of Mayotta, then in subjection to that monarch. To this the fact of his being a Mahometan no doubt in a great measure contributed.

Calm and light winds are prevalent about these islands, particularly in September, when we visited them, so that, although the high land of Mayotta was visible shortly after we started from its sister island, it was not till the morning of the third day that we anchored outside a reef on its north-eastern side, close to a small detached island called Nisamboro, on which many wild goats were seen browsing. Being anxious to commence my exploration of the island, I was accommodated with a boat by the master, and, accompanied by Shea, left the vessel to wait for a fair wind with which to pass through an opening in the reef some four or five miles distant. My four blacks pulled lustily in for a small boat-channel, which Shea told me was to be found near the main island; but being unsuccessful in our search, and finding that the breakers were not heavy, the blacks jumped out and dragged the boat over the reef at its narrowest part. Once across, we were floating in water so smooth and clear that everything was visible at the bottom, where arose corals and other aquatic productions of so many variegated hues that they formed a complete sub-marine flower-garden.

Rowing and sailing, as occasion required, some twenty miles along the eastern coast, and in the broad channel between this and the reef which ran parallel with it at a distance of some three to four miles, we passed a number of small bays

and beautiful valleys, formed by divergent branches of the mountains in the centre, some of which appeared parched and barren, whilst others seemed clothed with verdure to the summit—and after having struck several times on isolated coral rocks, which rose from the bottom like so many large cabbages, by four o'clock we reached a small island, separated from the main by a narrow deep-water channel, and on which N'zaoudzi, the only town of Mayotta, is built.

As we approached, I was informed by Shea that this island is about a mile and a half in circumference, and rises perpendicularly from the water on every side but one, where there is a shelving beach, defended by a thick wall and small square towers, erected at equal distances and of different heights, according to the facility of access. The gates are locked every evening at dusk, and the keys left with the governor, without whose permission no one can quit or enter the town. These precautions were said to be adopted owing to Ramaneetoka's expected invasion.

We were received on the beach, outside the walls, by a number of the inhabitants, a mixture of Sacalavas, Autalouts, Johannamen, &c., who all greeted us very cordially with hearty shakes of the hand. Shea Abdallah was of course well acquainted with many of his countrymen, and by them we were conducted through the gate into a hut belonging to the Cadi, which was soon thronged, and various were the questions asked as to the cause of our visit, where we came from, &c. Having replied to these in a satisfactory manner to all parties, I asked when Dansúlú would be visible. The answer was, "Not till the evening;" so we sat down at once to some boiled rice and curried fowl, hospitably provided by our entertainer the cadi, and afterwards proceeded on a voyage of discovery through the town. This I found to be composed, as usual in these islands as well as in Madagascar, of huts of different sizes, constructed of the leaf-stocks of some of the palm tribe, and roofed with the leaves themselves, presenting generally a very neat appearance, and quite suitable to the climate. The streets were so narrow that the houses on either side could be almost touched at once by stretching out the arms. The Mahometan part of the population was generally dressed in dirty, close-fitting robes or gowns of the colour of nankeen, and wore turbans—some white, others of the true Arab pattern. The blacks and Sacalavas had merely a cloth round the loins. The great majority were sitting at their doors listlessly smoking; but to these the Banyans or Indian merchants formed a striking exception. These men appear to find their way in the East wherever money is to be made, and may in some respects

be compared to the Jews. In Mayotta, or rather its capital, their usual plodding money-making habits were visible—for they appeared to be the only shopkeepers, and sat in their dark dens behind their display of drugs, condiments, &c., patiently awaiting their customers. After traversing a few lanes we suddenly stumbled on the high court of justice for the trial of all offences, great and small, held in the open air outside the Governor's house. The latter and the Cadi were seated with their backs against the wall, whilst plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses, formed a semicircle at a respectful distance—all squatting on their heels in an apparently very uncomfortable position.

A message being now brought that Dansúlú was ready to receive us, we proceeded forthwith to his residence, of which he has two, the only stone buildings in the island. From the rough couch on which he sat cross-legged, the Governor motioned me to advance, and received me, like the rest of the islanders, with a cordial shake of the hand. From him I had again to undergo a long series of questions; in addition to which he was very curious to be informed of some of the English manners and customs, and in his observations on these he betrayed a good deal of intelligence.

After being assured by Dansúlú of his friendship for the English, and his wish to see me as often as I could spare time to pay him a visit, we took our leave, and proceeded to the house of the self-styled Prince Hussein, Shea's nephew, who had invited me to take up my abode with him. There was only one room to which visitors were admitted; but this was much more commodiously furnished than Dansúlú's, being surrounded with couches, provided with soft pillows—indeed everything wore an aspect of more comfort than usual. The remainder of the hut was occupied by the females of his family, invisible to strangers; and though quite a boy, I understood that he already had the full complement of four wives allowed by the Mahometan religion.

The next morning we started on an excursion to a small island connected at low water with N'zaoudzi, and called by the natives Pamanzi, the chief feature in which is a remarkable basin, evidently an extinct crater. On the isthmus were drawn up several dows or Arab craft, several of them with their timbers fastened together with coir-rope, and all with the elongated bow characteristic of this description of vessel.

On reaching the island itself we crossed a mangrove swamp overflowed at high water, passed a small ruined mosque and a plantation of bananas, and climbed a hill some 300 to 400 feet in height, on reaching the crest of which we found our-

selves standing on the edge of a large basin little less than a mile in diameter. At the bottom, and occupying about half its extent, was a lake of water of a dark green colour, apparently on the same level as the sea, which was confirmed by my guide saying that it rose and fell with the tide. We descended the precipitous pathway, and, passing through some long grass and reeds, reached the margin of the pool. The water we found to be intensely salt; but not many feet from the brink are two or three small wells from which is procured good and fresh water. The guide informed us that the water of the lake itself possesses such peculiarly bleaching properties that no soap is requisite for washing linen with it. There is but one kind of fish in the lake, small and of a reddish colour. On its shores were a number of palm-trees; but nearly the whole of them appeared to have been struck by lightning, or to have decayed through some cause or other, for the trunks alone were standing. There were also a few stunted shrubs. Reascending the side of the crater by the same path, we prosecuted our researches by skirting it till we reached the opposite side, when we perceived that a few nooks or ravines gave shelter to a number of "sampo-trees," and some few others. The sampo-tree is of the palm tribe, and produces a pulpy fruit, from which oil can be extracted, which is mostly exported to Mozambique as food for the slaves. The sea dashed with great fury against the base of the cliffs on this side, and nothing but breakers could be seen to the N. and S. Hearing from our guide that a substance something similar to salt was to be found amongst the cliffs, which he called "majadi," we proceeded in search of it, and found some adhering in small scales to the outside of the cliffs. It was very white, and of a bitter flavour (nitrate of soda?). The cliffs were extremely steep; and in some of the ravines a number of the bats, vulgarly called flying-foxes, were hanging from the branches of the trees, uttering shrill cries. They were in no way alarmed by our appearance, but continued their squabbings till a musket-shot discharged over the trees drove them off in a dense cloud.

Having now made arrangements for visiting the peak, which forms the most interesting feature in the scenery of the main island of Mayotta, and which reared its lofty head at a distance of some 20 to 25 miles from the town, I started early on the following morning with Prince Hussein, who had been exceedingly attentive during my stay, and who volunteered to accompany me; Eusimo, one of the few remaining aborigines of the island; my servant Adda; a gigantic Johannaman; and an Autalout, Salem Dactore by name, whom I hired as a guide—paddling over the channel in a lacca or canoe, with an outrigger, and

capable of holding half a dozen people, we landed at the foot of a hill crowned by a stockade, constructed formerly by Dansúlú for his defence against Ramaneetoka, and which enclosed a somewhat considerable Sacalava village.

From hence the path led at first chiefly along the shore of a bay, sometimes through a mangrove-swamp, at others through long grass and numberless plants, creepers, &c., exhibiting all the luxuriant vegetation peculiar to tropical climates. Now and then we passed under the delightful shade of banana and plantain-trees, from which the fruit was hanging in clusters, tempting both to our sight and taste. At one spot on the beach a dow was building; the wood employed in its construction was of very hard texture, and I was informed that abundance of the same description could be found over the island. Close to it a blacksmith's shed had been erected for the purpose of forging the iron-work to be employed on the craft, and the workmen appeared to handle their tools with great dexterity. The bellows, similar to those used in Madagascar, were two goat-skins, one end of each of which was opened and closed alternately by the hand of the blacksmith. Charcoal was the fuel used, mineral coal being quite unknown.

Leaving the shore we now struck more inland, and passed over a succession of low hills and beautifully undulating country, with small streams winding along the bottoms, and of the most fertile description, here and there patches of ground planted with tobacco, along the margins of the streams clusters of papaw and guava-trees, and the sides of the hills covered with woods. These, however, were not of many years' growth, and owed their existence to the greater portion of the aboriginal population having been carried off as slaves previous to the abolition of the slave-trade in Madagascar. To this, as is well known, Radama was induced by British interference; indeed up to the time of his death a certain annual sum was paid him in lieu of the profits he derived from the traffic. In these villages were mostly old men and women, very few boys or girls, or even children of tender age. On ascending hills of higher elevation the soil became more parched, and in many places destitute of vegetation; yet the valley still presented the same features; the streams being numerous, though small, and full of beautifully clear water—whilst their banks were thickly wooded in many places, and the banana, plantain, cocoa-nuts, papaw, and other fruit-trees flourished without an owner to claim their produce. As we approached the centre of the island there were indeed but few signs of inhabitants, still a patch of tobacco or sweet potatoes was sometimes met with, and the grass was on fire here and there, showing at

all events that man was in the neighbourhood. On many spots there were groups of huts, evidently long deserted, giving an air of desolation to the scene, but clearly proving that the island must formerly have been thickly peopled. Some very beautiful natural arbours appeared amongst the trees, formed by the numerous creepers, which hung in graceful festoons, covered with berries and flowers of varied hues. The trees themselves were of every graceful variety of shape, some tapering like the pine, others spreading their branches like the oak. No animals whatever, either wild or tame, were to be seen, but at long intervals we saw the traces of cattle, said by our guide to be wild, and probably either once tame or the descendants of those in the possession of the inhabitants, which escaped into the woods when their owners were driven off. Guinea-fowl we now and then caught a glimpse of. Wild pigeons also, mostly with white heads, necks, and breasts, and bodies of a slaty colour, were common, and I shot several which were attracted near us by Salem's imitating their peculiar note. Pigeons of darker colours were likewise seen, as well as several varieties of doves, and numbers of large brown hawks and crows. Amongst the smaller birds were the common sparrow, a few fly-catchers, *hâve de vêts*, and humming-birds. One cluster of trees was completely covered with the large species of bat before-mentioned, and which at a distance gave them the appearance of being covered with fruit, these animals being of a reddish colour. I was told that there are but few snakes on the island, and these small and harmless.

At 4 o'clock we reached the gorge between the double crest of a mountain covered with forest: from it the sea to the west of the island was visible. For some time after this our route lay downwards through some very thick forest, principally of palm-trees, and as it grew dusk the numerous trunks of those which had fallen across the path rendered our walk rather hazardous. After making our way slowly for some three hours without seeing any habitations, I was gladdened by the intelligence that we were approaching a hamlet; this we found as usual situated on a slight elevation, round which the forest had been cleared away, and consisted of half a dozen huts, inhabited by elderly men and women. Every village, however small, has its chief, to whom, as on the continent of Africa, the stranger applies for a night's lodging. In this instance he appeared in the form of a venerable old man, with a long white beard, and bent double with age. After scanning us with curious eyes and hearing our request for hospitality, he ordered out some hides which were spread in the open air with a straw-mat over them, on which we were requested to

repose after our toilsome journey of some 20 to 25 miles, whilst a hut was being prepared for our reception. Some fowls were killed, and whilst these were being boiled with rice by Adda for our supper, we endeavoured in vain to enter into conversation with our host.

Having rewarded our host with a clasp-knife and a razor, with which he appeared much pleased, we started at 9 A.M. for the peak, which towered to a considerable height at a distance of some six miles from us. Proceeding at first over the low grounds, which were still thickly wooded, we passed several dry channels of what are torrents in the rainy seasons. The variety of trees was rather numerous, several of them bearing fruit.

From our halting-place to the peak, and as far as we could see, all was solitude, and it was in deep silence that we gradually approached the summit.

The hills in its immediate vicinity were of loose friable earth, white, red, and grey—partly clothed with wood—partly parched and destitute of vegetation. Winding round the base of the peak, where the path led through a thick wood, we commenced its ascent on the southern side, where it appeared most easy of access, and in fact at this spot we met with no great trouble; but when we had mounted about one-third of the distance, the path terminated, and the difficulty was greatly increased. Here poor Prince Hussein fairly gave in, and declared that he could proceed no higher; but his attendant, Eusimo, a smart active young fellow, who had already made the ascent, offered to lead the way; so, having divested myself of every incumbrance, with the exception of my walking-staff, we clambered on, leaving the Prince in charge of the baggage.

The feat we were now undertaking was one of no small difficulty, as the peak rose almost as perpendicular as a wall before us, and, had it not been for the trees which on one side grow nearly to the summit, the ascent would have been impracticable. Here and there huge stones jutted out, requiring great efforts to clamber over; the soil, where it appeared, was hard and smooth, and, consequently, slippery; now and then a treacherous kind of grass, the leaves of which were as sharp as razor-blades, inflicted cuts on our hands; and lastly, from time to time our progress was impeded by a creeper armed with huge thorns entangling itself in our clothes. Climbing as we best could, with all our energies employed in overcoming the obstacles opposed to us, and without the slightest idea that there was any wild animal near us, we were suddenly startled by a singular grunting amongst the trees in every direction, and looking around we found ourselves sur-

rounded by numbers of those graceful animals, the lemur, some of which were swinging by their tails, and looking down upon us with the utmost curiosity. Clambering on with renewed energy we at length found ourselves without the belt of trees that had rendered such opportune assistance; beyond them, however, the irregularities in the soil formed steps to aid us, and by 3 o'clock P.M. we reached the summit, having occupied six hours in the ascent. The elevation we had now attained, which I estimated to be about 2000 feet, afforded of course a most comprehensive view of the greater portion of the island. Immediately below were hills of different degrees of elevation, and of a variety of hues; beyond them for some distance was a confused mass of forest, and then again mountains almost equalling in height the peak on which I stood. On the west side of the island was a deep bay, studded with islets interspersed with breakers, rendering that side completely unapproachable. Not a hut was visible from that eminence, and all appeared to be one vast solitude. The summit of the peak, which might be some 20 yards square, was clothed with ferns of great beauty, and plants unknown to me, but well worthy the attention of the botanist. The mosses also were exceedingly beautiful and of the most delicate texture. A stone three feet in height was stuck upright in the centre of the platform, and the natives with me regarded it with superstitious veneration. Close to it was a young coconut tree, planted about two years before, which, if it ever reach its full growth on that exposed spot, will be a very prominent object, and present to the beholder from below the appearance of a small plume on a sugar-loaf hat. Overhanging the tremendous abyss on the northern side, perpendicular from the summit to the base, was a tabular mass of rock, resembling freestone, of which indeed the whole hill appeared to consist. Being the first European who had ever stood, according to the account of the natives, on that proud eminence, I, Englishman-like, engraved my name with the date of the year deeply in it with hammer and chisel. Having accomplished this, we now commenced our descent, which was, if possible, more difficult than the ascent; and rejoining Prince Hussein, proceeded in an easterly direction towards our resting-place for the night.

The next day, leaving the shore, we passed several hamlets, all, like the rest, very thinly inhabited, and crossing a number of beautifully clear streams, travelled slowly over some 15 miles of tolerably level ground until we reached a rather considerable village, situated at the base of a precipice, which hung frowningly overhead. This was under the control of Dinaro, one

of the most powerful chiefs of the Betsimasarakas, who have fled from Madagascar to avoid the persecutions of the Ovahs. Into his hut, which differed from the rest only in size, we entered, and met with a very cordial reception. The chief was a tall handsome man of copper colour, having merely a cloth round his loins; whilst his wife, a portly damsel some shades lighter, wearing a clean white lamba or cloth thrown gracefully over her shoulders and descending to her feet, leaving her right arm exposed, was seated on a plain bamboo couch. The hair of both, as well as of all their attendants, was the most singular feature in their appearance, being long and black, but plaited into numberless little tails, which made them look singularly wild. The men had no whiskers, but simply a small tuft on the chin as an apology for a beard. Near the entrance were a number of his concubines and children, cooking rice, which forms their principal diet. A number of "laccas" or canoes were drawn up on the beach just opposite the village, whilst in others some of the men of the tribe were busily engaged in spearing fish, which they did with great dexterity; at the same time many of the softer sex, mostly slaves, although of the same race, were engaged in pounding the paddy, by which operation the husk was disengaged from the beautifully white grain it covered. The women were mostly short and stout, but with pleasing features, and smiled graciously at our party.

After joining Dinaro and his wife in a family dinner of rice and sweet-potatoes, with fish, broiled on the embers of a wood-fire, I hired two laccas to return to the town, which was dimly seen at a distance, and impelled swiftly by paddles wielded by two brawny Betsimasarakas, one at the stem and the other at the stern, we arrived at our destination in two hours. Dansúlú sent for me as soon as he heard of our arrival, and was very anxious to know what space there was at the summit of the peak, as he said he wished much to build such a stronghold there as would effectually defend him against Ramanee-toka's attacks.

After resting for a couple of days I undertook another excursion in a north westerly direction, passing over very much the same description of ground, and meeting with as few inhabitants as before; then taking a very cordial leave of Dansúlú we went away, intending to try a channel through the reef to the southward, which is made use of by dows, but as we were at dinner a grating noise was suddenly heard, and there we were stuck hard and fast on a reef, which was not visible till the vessel was close to it. Fortunately, however, the coral was soft, and we sustained no damage, so in a couple of hours

we were warped off with a kedge, and anchored till the following day, when we turned towards the northern opening; but, owing to the want of wind, made but little progress towards it, merely passing a few miles beyond the town. The calm continuing the next day, the boats were got out and towed us for some time, but at length a breeze sprung up, and we neared the opening, which was exceedingly narrow, scarcely affording space for a frigate to pass through. The waves were tumbling on the reef with a stunning noise, and the breeze not being altogether in our favour, we were almost in despair of clearing the opening; yet on we went, both boats still towing—nearer and nearer we came to the breakers, and smaller appeared the chance of avoiding them; suddenly the breeze fell, and the current set us in towards them,—two minutes more and we should have been among them, but fortunately, the boats turned the vessel's head round in time, and as there was just room to tack, we were safe, anchoring in 12 fathoms water immediately afterwards. The crew soon commenced their usual amusement of fishing, and in a very short time we were provided with a magnificent garopa for supper. The next day the breeze being fair we passed through with safety, and left this beautiful island far behind us.

III.—*Remarks on the Country, Products, and Appearance of the Island of Rodriguez, with Opinions as to its future Colonization.*
By EDWARD HIGGIN, Esq. (Communicated by H. E. Strickland, F.R.G.S.)

[Read June 26, 1848.]

THE Island of Rodriguez is one of the dependencies of Great Britain, and at present within the jurisdiction of the government of the Mauritius. It is situated in Lat. 19° 30' S., Long. 63° 50' E., within the tropics, and under the influence of the south-east trade-winds.

The land extends in a nearly due east and west direction for about 12 miles, with coral reefs running out about 3 miles more at the western end. The width varies from 3 to 6 miles, the narrowest part being towards the east, where the cliffs rise abruptly from the shore, with deep water immediately outside a barrier reef. The appearance of the island is striking from the ocean. A central peak of granite rises from the midst of a group of hills, divided from each other by valleys running north and south.

The chief substance of the land is granite, with beds of